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ABSTRACT

The practicum reported in this document provided an alternative method of teaching vocabulary to students characterized as disabled readers. The method was a naturalistic approach of reading stories aloud to students, combined with guided discussions before, during, and after the reading to develop critical thinking skills. A target group of 11 first graders participated in the program. The overall objective was the acquisition of vocabulary through reading aloud to students. The target group listened to 5 books over a 10-week period. A selected group of vocabulary words unfamiliar to a first grader were used as the test words. Pretests and posttests were administered to measure the extent of new vocabulary the target group acquired from listening to the same story being read several times. The results showed that reading aloud constitutes a major source of incidental vocabulary acquisition, and that teacher explanation of a word meaning and related activities allow a significant amount of vocabulary to be internalized. (Three tables are included; 23 references and 8 appendixes--containing data, pre- and posttests, and selected vocabulary--are attached.) (Author/PRA)

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THE ACQUISITION OF VOCABULARY FROM READING STORIES ALOUD

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Linda Blondet Fondas

A Practicum Report
submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education of Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in the School Practices Information Files for reference.

March 1992

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Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Signed Linda B. Fondas

Linda B. Fondas

Abstract

The Acquisition of Vocabulary From Reading Stories Aloud.
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Descriptors: Vocabulary/Vocabulary Development/Verbal Development/Reading Processes/Reading Skills/Story Telling/Story Reading/

This practicum describes a program of providing an alternative method of teaching vocabulary to students who are categorized as disabled readers. The method was a naturalistic approach of reading stories aloud to students, combined with guided discussions before, during and after to develop critical thinking skills.

The target group listened to five books over a 10 week period. A selected group of vocabulary words unfamiliar to a first grader were used as the test words. Pretests and posttests were administered to measure the extent of the new vocabulary the target group acquired from listening to the same story being read several times. The results showed that reading aloud constitutes a major source of incidental vocabulary acquisition, and that teacher explanation of word meaning and related activities provide for a significant amount of vocabulary to be internalized.

A target group of 11 first graders from the writer's class participated in this program. The overall objective of this program was the acquisition of vocabulary through reading aloud to students.

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE

Background

The writer of this practicum study has had over 20 years of experience in teaching. The first 16 years were spent teaching in an American school in the Bahamas. Most of the writer's teaching experiences have been in third and fourth grade. This past year the writer was surplused and re-assigned to a first grade in an elementary school. This new experience of teaching first grade was an enjoyable and ever evolving learning experience for both the students and the teacher.

The setting for this study is in an elementary school located in an urban neighborhood. The socio-economic level of the community is upper-middle class. However, over a hundred of the students are bused in from an area that is made up of lower socio-economic families. There are over 1,100 students. According to the elementary school's annual report, the enrollment is distributed as follows: (Table 1)

Table 1

Student Population

Grade	Male	Female	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Indian	White
Kg	89	91	6	22	25	0	127
1	130	98	4	43	38	0	143
2	85	106	3	37	27	0	124
3	116	79	9	42	27	1	116
4	113	96	7	37	25	0	140
5	68	81	3	38	32	0	76
TOTAL	601	551	32	219	174	1	726

Bus transportation is provided for 20 percent of these students, and free or reduced lunch is provided for five percent of the enrollment. The population growth for this elementary school is relatively stable. The school has a little over 100 more students than were present over two years ago. The attendance averages 95.73 percent.

There are 51 instructional teachers on staff, two administrators, three clerks, two para-professionals, and four custodians. Through the help of a special parents' fund, teacher aides are provided for each teacher. The hours that these aides are working in the school are specified to be 100 percent contact hours

with the students. Each teacher is provided with two hours a week during the Language Arts block.

The parents are very involved in the school. Active support is provided by volunteers who give over 4,000 hours to the school. The parents are academically oriented and expect a high level of performance from the children. The students' work is always on display in the school and in the surrounding community. Along with the active support of the parents, the surrounding community has also taken an active role in becoming partners with the school. There are several joint projects where the partners work together with the teachers and parents for the enrichment of the student body.

There is a tremendous pride in the school shared by faculty, administrators, staff, parents and students. The teachers have demonstrated a very positive attitude by participating in such programs as Academic Excellence Program, Compensatory Education Program, Primary Education Program, Reading Acceleration through Computer Education, Exceptional Education Program, and Guidance and Language Program. The Florida Legislature has established a program to enhance the education of fourth and fifth graders.

This particular elementary school has been selected as the pilot school for this new innovative program.

The parents of many of the students who are bused in from the lower socio-economic neighborhood are not as involved as the surrounding community neighbors. Most of these parents are minority Blacks. These parents are less educated than the neighborhood children's parents. A new program called PLUS, Parents Leaders Understanding the School, has been established this school year to help enhance better communication between these parents and the rest of the school community. The school received funding geared to improving communication. The purpose of this program is to target the at-risk students and together with parents, close the achievement gap for these students.

The school has established three main goals for the school year:

1. Pursuit of academic excellence
2. Motivation of the at-risk student
3. Cultivation of each child's self-worth

Each year two types of tests are administered to measure student's progress. These tests are the Florida State Assessment Test (Table 2), and the

Stanford Achievement Test (Table 3). Following are the scores for the 1989-1990 school year:

Table 2

Florida State Assessment Test

Grade	Reading	Writing	Math
3rd	97	96	93
5th	91	92	91

Table 3

Stanford Achievement Test

Grade	
Kindergarten	
Environment	75
Mathematics	70
Sounds & Letters	78
Word Reading	90
Listening Words and Sounds	65
Total Reading	86

Grade	Reading Comprehension	Math Computation	Math Application
1	82	67	--
2	75	87	77
3	67	80	79
4	76	84	85
5	67	80	76

In 1990-1991, kindergarten did not take the Stanford Achievement Test.

The students have maintained favorable scores in both the Florida State Assessment and the Stanford Achievement Test.

The target group for this practicum study was composed of 11 students from the writer's first grade class. These students have volunteered to participate and their parents have consented to this study.

Problem Statement

This practicum dealt with the problem of vocabulary acquisition and the disabled reader. The method that has been used to teach vocabulary in the past has been the teaching of the meaning of the new word and teaching skills in deriving the word meaning through context.

These two methods have not been meeting the needs of all the first grade students. In this school year, which is the second year of using this particular basal reader, it has been found that a large number of first

graders are below reading grade level. The target school has over 220 first graders and 53 of these students are below grade level. Of these 53 students, there are 22 students who are categorized as "at-risk" students. Nine of the students come from homes that speak English as a second language.

Nine out of the 11 target students are part of this "at-risk" group. These nine students are bused in from the lower socio-economic neighborhoods. The parents of these target group students are not as involved in the school as the surrounding community neighbors. These students receive little support from their parents and the parents do not have high expectations for their children. These nine target group students are all part of the PLUS group that has been established at the school to help enhance better communication between the parents and the rest of the school community. The remaining two students of the target group are from homes that speak English as a second language. Several members of the target group are on the pre-primer level B and the remainder of the group is on pre-primer level C. The 11 target group students have all been placed below reading level according to the placement cards from the kindergarten

teachers. At the end of the school year, the teachers complete a reading placement card for each student. These placement cards state the projected instructional level for that child. The researcher administered the Slosson Oral Reading Test to the target group. This oral reading test is an individualized test which is based on the student's ability to pronounce words at different levels of difficulty. These test words are from standardized school readers. This oral reading test provides the teacher with a reading level that represents the median of standardized school achievement. Nine of the students placed below 0.5, and the remaining two scored 0.6 and 0.7. This test provided the researcher with another means of establishing that these students are below grade level (Appendix A:44).

The purpose of this practicum was to see if providing another method of teaching vocabulary to students who are categorized as disabled readers would help them to learn the meanings of many new words that they will hear from just listening to stories. The teaching method used was the naturalistic approach, that is reading aloud, and allowing the students to

acquire their new vocabulary from a naturalistic conversational setting.

The outcome was for an increased and strengthened vocabulary knowledge, an improvement in reading achievement, and a joy and value of literature.

Outcome Objective

The success of this practicum was measured by establishing the effectiveness of the following outcome objectives:

After a period of 10 weeks, 80 percent of the target group of first graders, working on a weekly vocabulary acquisition through reading aloud, will improve their mean score to 70 percent or better on the final posttest (Appendix B:46).

After a period of 10 weeks, 80 percent of the target group will demonstrate critical thinking skills by displaying an understanding of the selected vocabulary (Appendix C:50) through guided discussions on anticipating outcomes, drawing conclusions, fact versus opinion, reading between the lines, cause and effect problems and solutions, and character comparison by attaining an average score of 70 percent on the weekly posttest (Appendix D:52).

After each story that will be read to the target group, the first graders will demonstrate their comprehension of the story by completing one of the following assignments correctly: plotting the sequence of the story, retelling the story themselves, creative drama, puppetry, flannel board stories, art activities, or creative writing.

A pretest will be given to the students to determine their prior knowledge of the selected vocabulary words from all the stories (Appendix B:43). Thereafter, the students will be given a pretest on a selection of vocabulary from the story that will be read that week. The story will be read to the students each day for five days. At the end of the fifth reading, the students will be given a posttest to see if there is recognition of the meaning of the words. At the end of the 10 weeks, the target group will complete the posttest on the vocabulary words from all the stories.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

The benefits of reading aloud to children have been praised as an activity, but rarely has this form of reading instruction been established as an important tool for the acquisition of vocabulary. Research has shown that the two most prominent teaching methods for increasing word knowledge have been the teaching of the meaning of individual words and teaching skills in deriving word meanings from context. However, there are significant reasons to establish reading aloud as an important method for the acquisition of vocabulary at an early age.

Success in reading is a complex process involving many factors. These factors range from the type of environment, the physical aspect of the child, the cognitive, affective and educational development, to the language spoken in the home. Educators have recognized that rarely has one factor contributed to the causes of a student being disabled in reading. Progress in reading can be blocked by any number of

factors, and until these factors are dealt with in one way or another, or eliminated all together, they will continue to affect the success of the disabled reader. Since the students are unique individuals with few common denominators to work with, teachers must provide a common reference point to work from. Stories can provide for that common reference point in attitudes, likes, dislikes, beliefs and familiar experiences. Through reading aloud, the teacher can bridge some of the factors that affect a child's success in reading.

Stahl (1983, 1985) has remarked that to "know" a word, a person has to have both definitional and contextual information about the word. Nelson and Nelson (1978) remarked that small children learn to develop a flexible and decontextualized idea of a word's meaning through repeated refinement of the rules of meaning developed through several exposures to the word used in different contexts. The use of inferring or "inferencing" the meaning of an unknown word in context is a process of acquiring new vocabulary by utilizing attributes and contexts that are familiar. Children from diverse backgrounds bring with them limited common experiences. The teacher can utilize stories to provide a common experience, thereby giving

the students commonality to the new vocabulary. It has been noted by Goodman (1965) that children can read words in the context of a sentence, while they were unable to read the words when they were presented alone. Inference is a process that is vitally important in language use and language learning. Reading and listening are both receptive communication skills that foster critical thinking skills in questioning, hypothesizing, organizing, remembering, and judging information. Presenting new vocabulary in the oral-story context is an approach that has been overlooked. We know that small children acquire most of their new vocabulary in naturalistic context. Reading aloud is a naturalistic conversational setting that provides both a schematic framework for children and an intrinsic motivation to comprehend novel words. Only in the last few years have the benefits of reading aloud to students been linked with the acquisition of vocabulary for all students. Buchbinder, as quoted by Frick (1986), states that listening to stories can be "an introduction to vocabulary beyond a student's normal reading level with the added ability to grasp comprehension through context and inferred meaning" (p. 11).

Crais (1987) did a study on the acquisition of new vocabulary through stories to first, third, and fifth grade students. The students each heard four stories which included three nonsense words. The meaning of these nonsense words were derived from the propositional information given. Crais used the technique of fast mapping to learn the new vocabulary. This term is used to refer to a student's quick acquisition of the meaning of a word from a limited exposure to it. Two factors that affected the fast mapping of a word during story telling was the proximity or recurrence of the new word, and the second factor was the specificity of the information that was given about the novel word. Critical thinking skills such as drawing conclusions, brainstorming, reading between the lines and problem solving were employed by the students.

> The use of stories provided a natural context for word acquisition, motivated the subjects to attend to the task, and permitted the systematic manipulation of variables affecting the fast mapping process (Crais, 1987:6).

Crais' findings were that specificity and proximity of a word has differential effects on its acquisition. Thus, listeners processed aspects of a new word differently.

Success in reading comprehension is strongly related to a student's knowledge of words. The disabled reader has suffered due to the fact that instructions have been composed of descriptions, demonstrations, explanation and definitions that assume a sophisticated receptive vocabulary (Jenkins, Matlock, & Slocum, 1989). Their educational achievement is compounded by the fact that each school year text takes on a greater role in instruction, and factors such as comprehension of the material can be inhibited by lack of vocabulary knowledge. Our technological society has placed such demands on the importance of reading that finding a means to motivate a listener to become an avid reader has become one of the main goals of education. The phenomena that listening to a story stimulates the child to seek out the book should be enough to entice teachers to use this approach as much as possible in the classroom.

A search on a way of increasing and strengthening vocabulary for socially disadvantaged children was conducted by Cohen in 1968. Cohen selected reading aloud to these students as a means of achieving her objective. Seven elementary schools in New York City were selected because of their influx of a low

socio-economic population. The experimental variable, story-telling, was maintained by all the teachers in the experimental classes. These classes were asked to read a story every day from the books provided for this group. Guided discussions before, during and after the stories encouraged students to speculate and predict story development and later confirm and prove the story outcome. The teachers were to use critical thinking activities to go along with the stories. The books were arranged according to difficulty. The controlled classes were asked to conduct their class as usual with reading a story occasionally as a treat. Form B of the Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test was given in October, and Form C was given in June. A Free Association Vocabulary Test was also given. The instructions were the same for both groups. The students were to write down as many words as they could think of in 20 minutes. The experimental group showed an increase in Vocabulary by .005 over the control group, an increase in Word Knowledge by .005 over the control group, and an increase in Reading Comprehension by 01 over the control group. There was an increase in the quality of vocabulary by the experimental group over the control group with an F ratio of 3.45. This

study has shown the importance of reading to disadvantaged children as a precursor to success in learning to read.

> The slower the children are in academic progress, the more difficult it is for them to deal with words in isolation, unrelated to a totally meaningful experience. Vocabulary thus appears to be learned best by young children in a context of emotional and intellectual meaning (Cohen, 1968:213).

This picture of the child's success in reading comprehension can be compounded with another factor in reading development, that is language. Language plays a major role in the process of acquiring reading skills. It can be noted that a rich platform for learning and reading development can only be enhanced by the language abilities that a student brings with him from home. A low socio-economic status and limited education of the parents may indicate a lack of the availability of books in the home, no reading role models, limited experiences and background developments for the child. Public education in recent years has recognized that it is working with students that come to school with radically different languages than the "standard" English. Because of this, Rupley and Blair (1979) point out that bilingual children are often labeled as retarded readers with only minimal progress

in reading expected, an illogical assumption since such children can and have become successful readers. Education now has the added responsibility of providing models to provide a modeling of speech patterns on the syntactic and phonemic. Many students experience a different dialect in school as compared to the dialect at home, and the language used in books is closer to the "standard" English that is accepted in school. Consequently, the imitating of sounds or words has a direct correlation with an increase in vocabulary. Listening to words in context adds to the number of meanings in a student's receptive vocabulary. It also provides the listener with alternative ways to express himself. Therefore, reading aloud can and has enhanced vocabulary skills for students where experiential language background is limited.

A study conducted by Warwick (1989) in the Pacific Island demonstrates how reading aloud to students learning English as a second language and administering pretests and posttests to measure their acquisition of the new vocabulary, resulted in a significant gain in the students' vocabulary acquisition. Three experiments were conducted on nine to eleven year olds. A story was read to the first group three times during

the week, and were given no explanation of the target words. They showed a gain of 19 percent. The second group heard the story only once and were given a brief explanation of the meaning of the target words. They produced a gain of 20 percent. The third group heard the story three times and were given a brief explanation of the target words, and achieved an increase of 33 percent.

After observing over 80 studies of vocabulary instruction, Petty, Harold, and Stoll (1968) feel that there is no single "best" method for teaching vocabulary; that any instruction, they feel, is better than no instruction. The benefits of reading aloud to children give a summary of reasons to use this important teaching technique for the internalization of vocabulary for young children. According to recent research, the following six reasons are enough to determine the benefits of reading aloud to children:

1. Reading aloud promotes the modeling of language patterns.
2. It increases and strengthens the child's vocabulary.
3. It encourages an identification with models.

4. It allows for listeners to experience a commonality with other listeners from other backgrounds.
5. It develops listening and reading comprehension skills.
6. It initiates children into the joy and value of literacy.

From the search of the literature on the subject of vocabulary acquisition through reading aloud, it appears that using a combination of Crais' thoughts on the proximity or recurrence of the new word, and Cohen's method of using guided discussions before, during and after to develop critical thinking skills, along with the Warwick technique of reading the same story several times during the week, will provide a sound approach to enhancing the performance of vocabulary acquisition of the target group.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The following procedure and timeline was used in the implementation of this practicum.

Before implementing, the researcher met with the principal to discuss the objectives of this practicum and the plans for implementing the program.

The internalization of a receptive vocabulary is an important element of any reading program. Different methods and activities have been employed by reading teachers with the sole objective of finding a means for their students to internalize the new vocabulary. After reviewing several different studies, the writer decided to employ the strategies developed by different researchers. Using Nelson and Nelson (1978) ideas of repeated exposures of a word in different contexts, and Cohen (1968) strategy of storytelling, along with guided discussions before, during and after the stories to encourage the students to speculate and predict story development and outcome, will result in a measurable gain in the acquisition of a receptive vocabulary.

This researcher planned to use a method of reading aloud the same literature to students several times, along with guided discussions and activities to reinforce the meaning of the selected vocabulary. These multisensory activities, and not teaching vocabulary in isolation, were the strategies used to develop a receptive vocabulary by the students.

The target group was given a vocabulary pretest on 25 vocabulary words that were selected from the five books that were read to the target group during the 10 weeks. The test sentences on this multiple-choice pretest and posttest were read to the target group. The following books were read to the students during the 10 week implementation period:

Ming Lo Moves The Mountain by Arnold Lobel
(American Library Association Notable Book)

The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats
(Caldecott Award Book)

Crow Boy by Taro Yashima
(Caldecott Honor Book)

Lyle, Lyle Crocodile by Bernard Waber

Doctor De Soto by William Steig
(Newberry Honor Book)

A designated time was set aside each day to read to the students. A high interest book that is outside of the basal series which would also stimulate and challenge the talented readers, was read to the students for five days. A pretest on the selected vocabulary words from the book was administered on the first day. The test sentence was read to the target group along with the four choices. Since the sentences came directly from the books read, many of the words in the test sentence would be beyond the target group's reading ability. The target words were displayed in the classroom on a chart. Discussions and activities were planned to stimulate and facilitate the student's interest in the story as well as their acquisition of the new vocabulary words. At the end of the fifth reading, a posttest was administered to the target group. Once again the test sentences were read to the group, but this time the selected vocabulary choices were not read aloud. Each student in the target group had to identify the correct vocabulary word for each test sentence. This was to provide the researcher with information as to whether the student recognized the correct vocabulary word by sight. The schedule for the implementation was as follows:

WEEK ONE AND TWO

Day 1 - The researcher administered the pretest on the 25 target words.

Day 2-3 - A pretest on five vocabulary words from Ming Lo Moves The Mountain was given to the students.

- The first reading of the book Ming Lo Moves The Mountain by Arnold Lobel was read to the students. The selected vocabulary words were written on a chart and placed on the board. The researcher called the students' attention to the words.

Day 4-5 - The second reading of Ming Lo Moves The Mountain.

- The students were grouped together to discuss the sequence of the story.
- The groups acted out different parts of the story.
- The students were encouraged to use the new vocabulary words in the retelling of the story.

Day 6 - The group drew pictures to demonstrate their understanding of the new vocabulary words. They worked in groups, where each child was given one word to explain in a picture from the story. The students shared their word and picture with the class.

Day 7 - The third reading of Ming Lo Moves The Mountain. Discussion.

- The students made puppets of the different characters in the story.

Day 8 - The fourth reading of Ming Lo Moves The Mountain. The students acted out different parts of the story using their puppets. The group was encouraged to use the new vocabulary words in their creative drama.

Day 9 - The fifth reading of Ming Lo Moves The Mountain. The students finished the creative drama from Day 8.

Day 10 - The target group was given the posttest on the new vocabulary words.

WEEK THREE AND FOUR

Day 1 - The researcher administered the pretest on the new vocabulary words from The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats.

Day 2 - The first reading of The Snowy Day. The new vocabulary words were written on a chart and placed on the board.

Day 3-4 - The second reading of The Snowy Day.

- The researcher took the target group outside to the playground. The students walked in the sand, made different types of tracks in the sand, and compared this activity to the story.

Day 5 - The third reading of The Snowy Day.

Day 6 - The fourth reading of The Snowy Day.

- The target group was divided into groups. Each student was given one new vocabulary word to use in a sentence. The students illustrated their sentences on construction paper.

Day 7 - The students made snowmen. Afterwards they wrote a story about their snowman. They had to use at least two of the new vocabulary words in their stories.

Day 8-9 - The fifth reading of The Snowy Day,

- The students read their stories to the class.

Day 10 - Posttest on the new vocabulary words.

WEEK FIVE AND SIX

Day 1-2 - Pretest on the new vocabulary for the book Crow Boy.

- First reading of Crow Boy by Taro Yashima. The new vocabulary words were displayed on a chart.

Day 3 - Second reading of Crow Boy.

Day 4-5 - The researcher divided the students into groups. Each group was given a new vocabulary word. They were to draw a picture from the story that demonstrated the meaning of the word. Their work was displayed alongside the new vocabulary word.

- Third reading of Crow Boy.

Day 6-7 - Fourth reading of Crow Boy.
Discussion (fact versus opinion)

Day 8-9 - The students made flannel board characters and acted out different parts of the story.

Day 10 - Posttest on new vocabulary words.

WEEK SEVEN AND EIGHT

Day 1-2 - Pretest on the book Lyle, Lyle Crocodile by Bernard Waber.

- First reading of Lyle, Lyle Crocodile.
Displayed the vocabulary words on a chart.

Day 3-4 - Second reading of Lyle, Lyle Crocodile
Discussions (problems and solutions).

- The researcher gave each student in the group a vocabulary word to use in a sentence. Afterwards, each student read the sentence to their group members.

Day 5-6 - Third reading of Lyle, Lyle Crocodile

- Art activity. The students made crocodiles out of cardboard egg cartons, paint, construction paper and pipe cleaners.

Day 7-8 - Fourth reading of Lyle, Lyle Crocodile.

- The students drew a picture for each of the new vocabulary words.

Day 9 - Fifth reading of Lyle, Lyle Crocodile.

- The researcher called on volunteers to define the new vocabulary words.

Day 10 - Posttest on the new vocabulary words.

WEEK NINE AND TEN

Day 1-2 - Pretest on new vocabulary words from the book Doctor De Soto by William Steig.

- First reading of Doctor De Soto.

The new vocabulary words were displayed on a chart.

Day 3-4 - Second reading of Doctor De Soto.

- Discussion (cause and effect).
- The students made a book-go-round. Each child drew a scene from the story and wrote a sentence to describe their picture. The target group was encouraged to use the new vocabulary words in their sentences.

Day 5-6 - Third reading of Doctor De Soto.

- The students wrote a sentence about the story. Afterwards, the students organized the sentences into the correct sequence of the story.

Day 7-8 - Fourth reading of Doctor De Soto.

- Game: The students wrote a definition for one of the vocabulary words. The other students tried to guess the meaning of the word from the definition that the student gave.

Day 9 - Fifth reading of Doctor De Soto.

- Discussion questions for each group.

Day 10 - Posttest on the new vocabulary words.

Day 11 - The Posttest on the 25 selected vocabulary words were given to the target group.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Two approaches of evaluation were used to measure the objectives of this practicum.

The first method of evaluation was the pretest and posttest strategy used to improve the target group's vocabulary acquisition through multiple-choice tests on verbal synonyms. The writer read a sentence with a synonym of the selected new vocabulary word, and the students circled the word that meant the same as the underlined word in the sentence. The objective was that after a period of 10 weeks, 80 percent of the target group were to have improved their score to 70 percent or better on the final posttest. The posttest was the same writer-constructed multiple-choice test given at the beginning of the 10 weeks. The 11 students in the target group who took the posttest on the 25 words did show a considerable improvement in the scores over the pretest. Eighty percent of the students scores over 70 percent (Appendix E:58). Student one scored an eight percent on the pretest and

64 percent on the posttest, and student nine scored 40 percent on the pretest and made a 56 percent on the posttest. These two students did not meet the outcome objective, but showed a measurable improvement between the pretest and posttest. Students six and eight both scored a 0 percent on the pretest and improved to an 80 percent and 76 percent respectively.

The second method of evaluation was the weekly pretest and posttest. Eighty percent of the target group were to have demonstrated critical thinking skills that were measured by a writer-made modified cloze activity. The cloze activities were sentences or passages from the literature in which the new vocabulary words had been omitted. The students were given four choices from which to select a new vocabulary word for the correct choice. This type of measurement was chosen because it tested the student's knowledge of vocabulary words used in context. The students therefore had to use critical thinking skills to determine the correct vocabulary word for the sentence. To meet the outcome objective criteria, the student must have attained an average score of 70 percent on the weekly posttest (Appendix F:60). Eighty percent of the target group maintained a better than

average score of 70 percent on all the weekly posttests. Student number one and student number six were the only two students who did not score an average of 70 percent on the weekly posttest. All the members of the target group did show some significant gain in their acquisition of the vocabulary from the pretest to the posttest (Appendix G:66).

As the practicum evolved, the writer decided to evaluate the pretest and posttest responses to see how many members of the target group circled the correct vocabulary word in the writer-made cloze test. During the 10 weeks there were 25 vocabulary words that were selected from the five books read to the students. The writer recorded the number of correct responses for each of the 25 vocabulary words on the pretest and posttest. It was noticed that the target group showed an improvement in correct responses of 80 percent in the posttest. The target group demonstrated an increase in vocabulary knowledge on 20 out of the 25 vocabulary words selected for testing. The target group did not show an improvement in correct responses for the words lonely, nickname and spirit. Eight students circled the word village on the pretest and only seven knew its meaning on the posttest and 10

students circled the word assistant on the pretest and only nine students gave the desired response on the posttest (Appendix H:68).

At the end of the 10 week period, the target group demonstrated their acquisition of all the vocabulary words from the five books read aloud. The literature that was selected provided the students with an improved receptive vocabulary. The stories took into account the interest and backgrounds of the students. At the conclusion of the practicum, 80 percent of the target group improved their comprehension of the selected vocabulary words. The outcome objective showed that the students gained an increased knowledge of vocabulary. This enabled the disabled reader to be better prepared for effective experiences in reading.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

This practicum program proved to be a successful alternative to teaching vocabulary to students who are categorized as disabled readers. The two other methods for increased word knowledge have been teaching of words in isolation and teaching skills in deriving word meanings from context. These methods have not been meeting the needs of the target group. The benefits of reading aloud in this program have been a rewarding tool to teaching word meaning to no only "at-risk" first graders, but to any child regardless of his reading ability. The repeated exposures to the word used in different contexts, provided all the students with a commonality to the new vocabulary word. The naturalistic conversational settings provided the students with a schematic framework and intrinsic motivation for comprehending the new words. The enthusiasm generated by the teacher in the program produced enthusiasm in the students for more books and activities. The exposure of literature that was

outside of the basal readers stimulated positive reactions from the target group. The evaluation results provide another reason to use this vocabulary program.

This practicum will provide teachers with an alternative mode for teaching new vocabulary to students. The reading teachers will find that reading aloud to students is a productive technique for stimulating young readers into the joy and value of literacy. Furthermore, this vocabulary program will demonstrate that new vocabulary can be learned incidentally from having illustrated books read to children, and that explanations of new words as they are encountered in the literature will further increase word knowledge to the disabled reader. The writer's concluding recommendation is that all subject area teachers use this method of reading aloud to their students as a means of enhancing their vocabulary skills.

This researcher plans to continue to use reading aloud as a method of improving word knowledge to all of the writer's students. The numerous benefits of reading aloud to children are as follows:

1. Reading aloud promotes the modeling of language patterns.
2. It increases and strengthens the child's vocabulary.
3. It encourages an identification with models.
4. It allows for listeners to experience a commonality with other listeners from other backgrounds.
5. It develops listening and reading comprehension skills.
6. It initiates children into the joy and value of literacy.

The results of this practicum will be shared with the school faculty to encourage more teachers to adopt this alternative method to increasing word knowledge. A copy of this report will be sent to the school librarian.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Slosson Oral Reading Test

APPENDIX A

Slosson Oral Reading Test

Student #	Score	Grade
1	5	0.2
2	7	0.3
3	5	0.2
4	14	0.7
5	6	0.3
6	3	0.1
7	9	0.4
8	7	0.3
9	5	0.2
10	8	0.4
11	13	0.6

APPENDIX B

Pretest/Posttest

APPENDIX B

Pretest/Posttest

Multiple-Choice Test

Directions: Circle the word that means almost the same thing as the underlined word or words in each sentence.

1. Chibi can copy a crow's voice.
   lonely imitate village nickname crows
2. Chibi was without company.
   imitate village nickname crows lonely
3. Chibi went to school in the town.
   village imitate lonely nickname crows
4. His pet name was Chibi because he was very small.
   nickname imitate lonely crows village
5. Chibi showed how the birds call when they are happy and gay.
   imitate lonely village crows nickname
6. Peter dragged his feet slowly to make a trail.
   deep slid tracks fallen snow
7. Peter and his friends went out together into the thick snow.
   deep slid fallen snow tracks
8. Peter climbed a mountain of snow and coasted down.
   fallen snow tracks deep slid

9. Snow had dropped on the ground during the night.

   snow fallen tracks slid deep

10. Frozen water covered everything as far as Peter could see.

    fallen tracks snow deep slid

11. Doctor De Soto, the dentist, did very good work on his sick people.

    patients assistant timid bicuspids creatures

12. Doctor De Soto's helper was also his wife.

    patients timid bicuspids creatures assistant

13. Doctor De Soto, being a mouse, refused to help even the most cowardly looking cat.

    bicuspids creatures timid patients assistant

14. The fox had a rotten tooth.

    creatures bicuspid timid patients assistant

15. A fox is a wicked, wicked beast.

    creature bicuspids patients assistant timid

16. The rooms inside Ming Lo's house were moist and drippy.

    wise damp mountain possessions spirit

17. Go and ask the learned man who lives in the village.

    mountain possessions spirit wise damp

18. Clouds formed at the top of the peak.

    mountain spirit wise damp possessions

19. Collect all of your belongings and face the mountain and close your eyes.

    mountain possessions damp wise spirit

20. Bake many cakes and loaves of bread and bring these to the ghost who lives at the top of the mountain.

    possessions damp wise spirit mountain

21. Signor Valenti had come to save Lyle.

    rescue browsing department occupants salesman

22. Mrs. Primm could spend hours looking around antique stores.

    department occupants salesman browsing rescue

23. Lyle heard a familiar voice near the pajama section.

    occupants department browsing rescue salesman

24. Lyle broke into the house and saved the still sleeping people.

    department rescue salesman browsing occupants

25. Signor Valenti was now very busy being a seller.

    salesman department rescue browsing occupants

APPENDIX C

Selected Vocabulary

APPENDIX C

Selected Vocabulary

1. imitate
2. lonely
3. village
4. nickname
5. crows
6. snow
7. tracks
8. deep
9. slid
10. fallen
11. patient
12. assistant
13. creatures
14. timid
15. bicuspids
16. damp
17. wise
18. spirit
19. mountain
20. possessions
21. rescue
22. browsing
23. department
24. occupants
25. salesman

APPENDIX D

Weekly Pretest/Posttest

APPENDIX D

Weekly Pretest/Posttest

Pretest/Posttest--Cloze Activity

Ming Lo Moves the Mountain

DIRECTIONS: Circle the word that correctly completes each sentence.

1. The rooms inside Ming Lo's house were _____ and drippy.
   damp mountain possessions spirit
2. Go and ask the _____ man who lives in the village.
   mountain possessions wise damp
3. Clouds formed at the top of the _____.
   mountain spirit wise possessions
4. Collect all of your _____ and face the mountain and close your eyes.
   mountain possessions damp wise
5. Bake many cakes and loaves of bread and bring these to the _____ who lives at the top of the mountain.
   possessions wise spirit mountain

Pretest/Posttest--Cloze Activity

The Snowy Day

DIRECTIONS: Circle the word that correctly completes each sentence.

1. Peter dragged his feet slowly to make a _____.
   slid tracks fallen snow
2. Peter and his friends went out together into the _____ snow.
   deep slid snow tracks
3. Peter climbed a mountain of snow and _____ down.
   snow tracks deep slid
4. Snow had _____ on the ground during the night.
   snow fallen slid deep
5. _____ covered everything as far as Peter could see.
   fallen snow deep slid

Pretest/Posttest--Cloze Activity

Crow Boy

DIRECTIONS: Circle the word that correctly completes each sentence.

1. Chibi can _____ a crow's voice.
   lonely imitate village crows
2. Chibi was _____ because he was without company.
   village nickname crows lonely
3. Chibi went to school in the _____.
   village imitate nickname crows
4. His _____ was Chibi because he was very small.
   nickname imitate lonely crows
5. Chibi showed how the _____ calls when they are happy and gay.
   imitate village crows nickname

Pretest/Posttest--Cloze Activity

Lyle, Lyle Crocodile

DIRECTIONS: Circle the word that correctly completes each sentence.

1. Signor Valenti had come to _____ Lyle.
   rescue department occupants salesman
2. Mrs. Primm could spend hours _____ around antique stores.
   department occupants salesman browsing
3. Lyle heard a familiar voice near the pajama _____.
   occupants department browsing rescue
4. Lyle broke into the house and saved the still sleeping _____.
   department rescue browsing occupants
5. Signor Valenti was now very busy being a _____.
   salesman department rescue browsing

Pretest/Posttest--Cloze Activity

Doctor De Soto

DIRECTIONS: Circle the word that correctly completes each sentence.

1. Doctor De Soto, the dentist, did very good work on his _____.
   patients timid bicuspids creatures
2. Doctor De Soto's _____ was also his wife.
   timid bicuspids creatures assistant
3. Doctor De Soto, being a mouse, refused to help even the most _____ looking cat.
   bicuspids timid patients assistant
4. The fox had a rotten _____.
   creatures bicuspids timid patients
5. A fox is a wicked, wicked _____.
   creature bicuspids patients timid

APPENDIX E

Pretest/Posttest

Appendix E

Multiple-choice Pretest/Posttest

Students	Pretest	Posttest
1	8%	64%
2	44%	92%
3	44%	84%
4	72%	96%
5	72%	76%
6	0%	80%
7	80%	92%
8	0%	76%
9	40%	56%
10	48%	80%
11	8%	92%

APPENDIX F

Cloze Activities

APPENDIX F

Cloze Activities

Ming Lo Moves The Mountain		AVERAGE 89%
Students	Pretest	Posttest
1	20%	40%
2	40%	100%
3	60%	100%
4	100%	100%
5	40%	100%
6	80%	80%
7	80%	100%
8	0%	100%
9	0%	80%
10	80%	80%
11	0%	100%

APPENDIX F

Cloze Activities

The Snowy Day		AVERAGE 80%
Students	Pretest	Posttest
1	0%	0%
2	100%	100%
3	80%	100%
4	100%	100%
5	40%	80%
6	40%	60%
7	100%	100%
8	0%	40%
9	100%	100%
10	60%	100%
11	0%	100%

APPENDIX F

Cloze Activities

Crow Boy Students	Pretest	AVERAGE 80% Posttest
1	0%	0%
2	60%	100%
3	20%	80%
4	100%	100%
5	20%	100%
6	80%	60%
7	100%	100%
8	20%	100%
9	60%	100%
10	60%	40%
11	20%	100%

APPENDIX F

Cloze Activities

Lyle, Lyle Crocodile		AVERAGE 74%
Students	Pretest	Posttest
1	20%	40%
2	20%	60%
3	60%	100%
4	40%	60%
5	80%	100%
6	40%	40%
7	60%	100%
8	20%	80%
9	20%	60%
10	40%	80%
11	100%	100%

APPENDIX F

Cloze Activities

Doctor De Soto		AVERAGE 80%
Students	Pretest	Posttest
1	40%	60%
2	60%	60%
3	60%	80%
4	60%	100%
5	0%	100%
6	60%	100%
7	100%	100%
8	0%	60%
9	60%	60%
10	60%	100%
11	60%	60%

APPENDIX G

Weekly Cloze Activity

APPENDIX G

Weekly Cloze Activity

	Pretest					
Students	1	2	3	4	5	Average
1	20%	0%	0%	20%	40%	16%
2	40%	100%	60%	20%	60%	56%
3	60%	80%	20%	60%	60%	56%
4	100%	100%	100%	40%	60%	80%
5	40%	40%	20%	80%	0%	36%
6	80%	40%	80%	40%	60%	60%
7	80%	100%	100%	60%	100%	88%
8	0%	0%	20%	20%	0%	08%
9	0%	100%	60%	20%	60%	48%
10	80%	60%	60%	40%	60%	60%
11	0%	0%	20%	100%	60%	36%

	Posttest					
Students	1	2	3	4	5	Average
1	40%	0%	0%	40%	60%	28%
2	100%	100%	100%	60%	60%	84%
3	100%	100%	80%	100%	80%	92%
4	100%	100%	100%	60%	100%	92%
5	100%	80%	100%	100%	100%	96%
6	80%	60%	60%	40%	100%	68%
7	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
8	100%	40%	100%	80%	60%	76%
9	80%	100%	100%	60%	60%	80%
10	80%	100%	40%	80%	100%	80%
11	100%	100%	100%	100%	60%	92%

APPENDIX H

Correct Responses on Selected Vocabulary Words

APPENDIX H

Correct Responses on Selected Vocabulary Words

		Correct Responses		
		Pretest	Posttest	Amount of Increase
1.	imitate	5	9	4
2.	lonely	7	7	0
3.	village	8	7	-1
4.	nickname	7	7	0
5.	crows	3	7	4
6.	snow	5	10	5
7.	tracks	7	10	3
8.	deep	5	7	2
9.	slid	6	9	3
10.	fallen	6	9	3
11.	patient	7	8	1
12.	assistant	10	9	-1
13.	creatures	8	9	1
14.	timid	5	7	2
15.	bicuspids	2	8	6
16.	damp	7	9	2
17.	wise	6	9	3
18.	spirit	9	9	0
19.	mountain	6	11	5
20.	possessions	5	8	3
21.	rescue	5	9	4
22.	browsing	3	5	2
23.	department	4	5	1
24.	occupants	4	6	2
25.	salesman	9	10	1